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APRIL 2020 | VOLUME 11 | ISSUE 4

YOUR DONATION BENEFITS THE VENDORS.  
PLEASE BUY ONLY FROM BADGED VENDORS.

Local leaders step up on climate  
action for Earth Day. **Page 6**



MEET YOUR  
VENDOR: **DAVID  
SAENZ, PAGE 3**

# GROUNDCOVER

NEWS AND SOLUTIONS FROM THE GROUND UP | WASHTENAW COUNTY, MICH.



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## LETTERS

## Powwow coverage appreciation

This is just to say that I appreciate Will Shakespeare's coverage of the Powwow, taking place late this month at Skyline High School. Of all the activities that take place in Ann Arbor on an annual basis, the Powwow is my favorite. Getting the word out about it is important.

David KE Dodge

## Stillness essay

Thanks for the well-done article on stillness in the [March] issue of GCN.  
It got me thinking (quietly).

Stu Simon

## Help protect homeless people from coronavirus

**JIM CLARK**  
Groundcover vendor No. 139

As I write this, the coronavirus has made its way around most of the globe and has invaded the United States. News stations are warning us to take special care of "vulnerable populations," including the elderly and those with complicating health conditions. Another vulnerable subpopulation, however, is the homeless community. Especially this time of year when lack of shelter can be dangerous, people struggle to stay protected from the existing biological hazards, let alone a pandemic.

During a visit to a local warming center, I had to use the restroom. On the floor around the toilet was a flotsam of human waste. I was once a health and safety manager; what I saw in that restroom

would have been considered a biohazard. Outside of the warming center, because there is a lack of public bathrooms in the city, alleys that homeless people also tend to sleep in. Over the summer, I camped in a tent by the Huron River. Others had camped there before, as evidenced by the abandoned tents and garbage. There were also bottles filled with urine, and several places that appeared to have been used as latrines.

It is not fair to say that homeless people are filthy. Those traumatized by losing their homes find the need for shelter taking a higher priority than any other need. The mentally ill may not be aware they are practicing poor hygiene. In general, economic disparity has a negative impact on

See **CORONAVIRUS** page 11 ➔

## Ensuring housing stability in the coronavirus crisis

## GROUNDCOVER STAFF

Policymakers are providing legislative spending packages aimed at addressing the impact of the coronavirus on public health and the economy. Any comprehensive response to coronavirus should include resources to help ensure housing stability for low-income individuals and people experiencing homelessness, including investments to:

- Provide housing and shelter to people experiencing homelessness who are at an increased risk of a coronavirus outbreak, so they have access to running water and a place to isolate themselves. Because people experiencing homelessness may be living in congregated communities — whether in encampments or shelters — and cannot self-quarantine, we must prepare now to contain an outbreak among people experiencing

homelessness. Congress must include in any response to the coronavirus outbreak significant additional resources for McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Grants and the Disaster Housing Assistance Program (DHAP). Providing \$1 billion in McKinney-Vento funds can help local communities minimize the number of people living in homeless encampments. DHAP, which has been used by past Republican and Democratic administrations after disasters, can be used to quickly get people into affordable homes.

- Create an emergency assistance fund to help prevent evictions by providing short-term financial assistance and housing stabilization services. Most families living in poverty spend at least half of their incomes on housing, leaving virtually no margin for an unexpected expense. Temporary declines of income and unreimbursed

medical bills can quickly send the lowest-income households down the spiral of housing instability, eviction and even homelessness. With the coronavirus outbreak, many low-income, hourly wage workers may see reduced wages, whether because they have become sick or need to care for a family member or because their employer cut back on their hours. Providing short-term assistance to stabilize individuals is far cheaper and safer than allowing households to become homeless. Congress should create a permanent emergency assistance fund of \$3 billion, like one proposed by Senators Michael Bennet (D-CO) and Rob Portman (R-OH) in the bipartisan Eviction Crisis Act, or provide resources for the Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Rehousing Program (HPRP), which was successfully used after the 2008 financial crisis.

- Provide access to legal services, foreclosure and eviction crisis counseling, and establish a moratorium on evictions and foreclosures during the crisis.

- Address the underlying cause of homelessness — a shortage of affordable housing — by increasing investments in the national Housing Trust Fund to help reduce risks for future outbreaks.

- Ensure access to healthcare, housing, food assistance and any other services provided in response to coronavirus to everyone in need, regardless of income, immigration status or insurance.

The \$2 trillion CARES Act stimulus package passed in late March did little to address these issues. Advocates secured benefits for low-wage workers but more work is needed to address the needs of those who were already living on the edge.

## GROUNDCOVER

## Mission

Creating opportunity and a voice for low-income people while taking action to end homelessness and poverty.

Susan Beckett — publisher

Andrew Nixon — editor

Lindsay Calka — layout editor

## This month's contributors

Elizabeth Bauman  
Jim Clark  
Christopher Ellis  
Elizabeth "Lit" Kurtz  
Ron Pagereski  
Ken Parks  
Will Shakespeare  
Kevin Spangler  
Aaron St. Germain  
Andre Vasher  
Will Williams

## Office volunteers

John Althaus  
Jessi Averill  
Peter Beyer  
Jerry Charbonneau  
Glenn Gates  
Robert Klingler  
Jon MacDonagh-Dumler  
Sandy Schmoker  
Nolan Smith  
Mary Wisgerhof  
Max Wisgerhof  
Andrea Zaghi

## Story and photo submissions

submissions@groundcovernews.com

## Advertising

contact@groundcovernews.com

## Contact us

groundcovernews.org

facebook.com/groundcover

twitter.com/groundcovernews

Office: 423 S. 4th Ave., Ann Arbor  
P: 734-263-2098

## MEET YOUR VENDOR



**David Saenz, vendor No. 495**

## In one sentence, who are you?

I'm a gentle soul in need of housing.

## Where do you normally sell Groundcover?

The People's Food Co-op.

## When and why did you start selling Groundcover?

I started selling Groundcover five months ago, in October, because a friend turned me on to the paper.

## What's your favorite thing about selling Groundcover?

The atmosphere and the personalities of some of the other vendors and customers.

## What is something our readers should know about you?

I am loving, sharing and caring. I go out of my way to give the shirt off my back to someone else that cannot afford something. My way is to kill people with kindness.

## What is your typical day like?

My typical day for me is pretty interesting. I get a lot of people who stop and converse with me before purchasing a paper.

## What is the most interesting thing that's ever happened to you while selling Groundcover?

One lady came up to me and did not want a paper but made a \$20 donation.

## What change would you like to see in Washtenaw County?

More choices and outlets for homeless people — mainly more housing.

## Inflexible newspaper summit canceled with coronavirus smothering Italy

Soon after news of the coronavirus outbreak hit, plans of attending the International Network of Street Papers Conference were quickly doused when Milan, Italy — the chosen place for this year's annual gathering — became one of the most affected areas of COVID-19 and the INSP conference was canceled. Later, the entire country was quarantined with reported cases of COVID-19 in the tens of thousands.

Amidst all the chaos of the pandemic, I received a response from INSP about my request that vendors be included in the INSP conference. (As promised in last month's editorial, I wrote a letter to the administrative coordinators of the street paper conference asking that we as vendors be included on its annual agenda. I reminded the head staffers that we are the engine of the organization and how crucial our voice is to making the street paper model reach its full potential. Groundcover publisher Susan Beckett had previously forwarded articles that expressed my ideas on vendor inclusion to Zoe Green-



field, team leader of the INSP.)

Ms. Greenfield's response indicated that only events aimed at staffers will be available at conferences. While vendors are able to attend, there are no activities centered around our needs. This is perhaps why a vendor who previously attended an INSP conference expressed feeling isolated.

Yes, there is the International Vendor Appreciation Week in February. Yes, there is a vendor training video. And, yes, vendor stories are shared on social media and among INSP newspapers. But this is the extent to which vendors are involved, relegating us to a merely symbolic role rather than ensuring

genuine and ongoing interaction with vendors on all levels of the organization.

In addition to writing to the INSP, I also spoke with the North America Street Paper coordinator, Israel Bayer, via phone along with Susan Beckett. Our conversation was productive, with promise of ongoing discussions and significant changes among North American street papers to bring about inclusion of vendors on the national and local levels, while inclusion at international conferences remains on the horizon. Plans are also in the making to formulate more vendor-centered activities here at Groundcover, as well.

So, as we hopefully begin to emerge from this frightening pandemic, it is my desire that vendors will be one segment of the homeless population that will usher in the inclusion that I am convinced plays a most vital role in ending homelessness for all.

Visit my website, [litspage.weebly.com](http://litspage.weebly.com), for more information and updates on vendors and vendor inclusion.

## Homage to Arthur Fillbrunn, Ann Arbor panhandler extraordinaire



Arthur was a fine citizen of our great community. He was an extraordinary entertainer, healer and human presence in the city of Ann Arbor. As far as I can remember, since my arrival in 2007, he was pan-handling in Ann Arbor.



**Arthur died from a stroke on February 25 at age 66.**



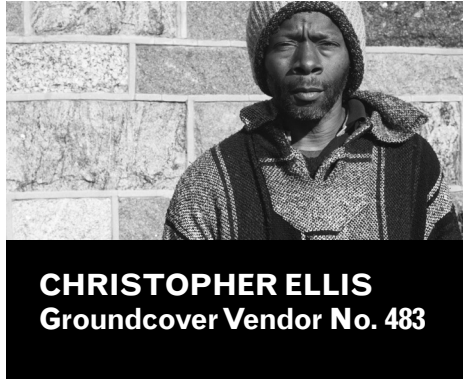
# Tongues of Fire: cross-country pursuit

The synagogue dwellers were long-gone, but they left the two golden candelabras on either side of the large, red-carpeted pulpit. The place where the Old Testament pillar of fire hovered for those modern dwellers, over cushioned pews, between rolls of marble columns that ascended high to the ceiling, was now home for my Pentecostal church.

Although my family wasn't part of The Great Migration of black southerners coming to Detroit, which began in 1916, our congregation was, overwhelmingly, of those that had.

Shaarey Zedek, a prominent Jewish congregation, had sought out different environs in Bloomfield Hills, a wealthy suburb of Detroit, leaving the mammoth synagogue whose wide concrete steps led a ways up to four large ornately carved wooden doors. The church facing the synagogue across the tree lined Boulevard was the Sacred Heart Seminary, the site of a racial incident during the blazing 1967 Detroit Riots. The seminary was surrounded by a tall wrought-iron fence which had inside an imposing statue of Jesus that seemed to serenely oversee the green and floral foliage.

The statue became a target for the racial unrest and seething anger that raged in the city. Some youth decided



**CHRISTOPHER ELLIS**  
Groundcover Vendor No. 483

to make it a symbol for the riot and protest. They scaled the sacred fence, aerosol black in hand, and proceeded to reface white stone Jesus into their own image. The groundskeeper would paint over the black apparition, which was limited to the face. However, in the morning, the image reappeared. This cat and mouse scenario continued over a few nights, and as the incident began to attract media attention the seminary relented and left stone Jesus black.

My Pentecostal church was vibrant, although not as musical or as open to the choir and the expressive holy dance as most of the denomination. Our founding pastor was a short man, who dressed fashionably and wore a white flower on his lapel. As a pre-adolescent at this church, prior to our

family's move to California, I vaguely remembered him; however, after our move west he visited us.

This was during the Watts Riot era in 1965. I have no memory of the blazing inferno and foment that engulfed the city, but I do remember this pastor coming from Detroit. He had come to dedicate our church which was pastored by a former member of his. I remember his wide-brimmed hat with a lighter grey band; he also wore dapper black-and-white shoes which narrowed at the toes. My siblings and I giggled as we had never seen an adult with such shoes.

He appeared uncomfortable as he sat at our sparse dining room table while our mother prepared him food. My 11 siblings and I lingered around the table. We were intrigued by this exciting little man all the way from the "Water Wonderland." We had read those words on the license plate of his large shiny automobile in our Compton driveway. We naively surmised that Michigan must have had an amusement park bigger than Disneyland.

Our church in Los Angeles was a converted large movie theater in which my father and the pastor, a bespectacled muscular man, worked with the other men to fashion it into a

church building. The old hollow church was ripe for my fears and vivid imagination. It smelled mostly of mildewed plaster that had to be repaired often. The congregation was in no way suited to the building's expanse. The pastor, obviously, took on the endeavor in which he envisioned unchurched droves from the teeming sunny land of Hollywood, Burbank and desperate Skidrow to fill these seats. Seats which rose narrow from the pulpit and widened rearward and centered at the balcony around a squared glass enclosure. This cubicle was the theater's film and projection booth, which now served as a kind of incubator for seekers of the Tongues of Fire.

You had to climb a shadowy winding back staircase to reach the incubator. It actually was larger than it appeared from below. We kids would pretend we were airplane pilots as we gazed down, far below, coming in for a landing smack beside my father's prostrate buttocks on the podium where he prayed.

The Tongues of Fire always held a sense of horror for me while my family lived in California, related to an incident that happened at the church one night. Timothy, one of my younger

See **FIRE** page 11 ➡

# Interconnectedness: socializing ourselves and our institutions

**KEN PARKS**

Groundcover vendor No. 490

The Eternal Champion is the hero in Michael Moorcock's series of pulp fiction books. A time traveler in the endless struggle between chaos and order, you never know what world he will land in as the adventure explores the recesses and pinnacles of imagination. The Shadow surprises you and flips on the light. You get a moment to contemplate the scene before the action picks up again. Now you must cross a log that fell across the bottomless gorge as the horde of ghouls you once killed is hot on your trail again. You take a breath, focus on this step before you take the next one, kick the log and escape into Paradise. You find peace and love for a spell.

The spell is broken, as chaos and order cannot rest. Maybe they are the knowledge of good and evil, when innocence is lost and you need a fig leaf to cover your ignorance. Joni Mitchell sang "Woodstock" to us at the Big Sur Folk Festival 50 years ago. "We've got to get ourselves back to the garden." What do you get when "you take Paradise and put in a parking lot?" These songs were written during the American war in Vietnam.

Power cannot impose its order as unintended consequences compound chaos. Results may be the opposite of conscious intentions. The mythic violence of every form of domination becomes bloody for those who are in the path of expanding exploitation and oppression or raise their head in opposition. Human dignity is assaulted by authoritarianism and its belief in its own brand of superiority.

How do we socialize order?

The question always before us is how to communicate, how do we use words so that the meaning is clear to oneself and others in the community, at least to someone significant in your life? We may need to learn natural breathing before we can practice natural speaking — or writing. We are hungry for "heart speak," which is emotional without falling into emotionalism.

When words become more important than experience, we suffer an alienation from our own self and others. We interpret experience by opinions that may cloud or deny the experience. We accept many opinions as we mimic our parents and peers in an attempt to socialize, survive and thrive. We are taught that order is the rule, chaos is bad and we must socialize our rebellion. It appears to be easier to follow the directions of others

and/or our own habitual patterns. Rebellion reappears, sometimes maybe creative, other times maybe destructive. What habits are we born with? Are we inclined towards freedom and responsibility?

So what is the proper way to socialize ourselves? Who is the teacher? My experience is that you master whatever lesson when you teach yourself. You may need a guide or mentor through uncharted territory until you have that aha moment and can move on your own.

I am looking at socializing the word *socialize*. Clarity and agreement are challenging in a world where the bottom line is the dollar sign. We want more than "Money counts, people don't."

A natural breath pause may reveal some answers. Sociality is the reality of our interconnectedness. Our experience of a permanent separate self can never be proven. If we examine it closely it cannot be found. You can believe in it but it has not worked well when we consider the world that appears before us. Nor can you find a first cause of anything. Assuming that infinity has no beginning, we are in this adventure from beginningless time.

Are we in deep enough to see the bottom?

I propose we use the word *social* to mean the world we live in as children of this earth and the responsibility we inherit as human beings to respect all our relations, to accept that reality is alive and vibrant. Responsibility and respect are the two hands that make reality a workable situation. It then takes a playful turn as we create a culture that loves life. Much of our everyday life has some of this quality. That is how we survive the madness that erupts into violence in our lives regularly. If we put our intelligence and wisdom together, we will find the courage to do what needs to be done. We will socialize ourselves with a deep sense of understanding that all actions have results, and that we are directly responsible for whatever situation we are in and for expressing the truth of our own life. If you are in the working class this will become natural for you. Challenge yourself and others to develop our talents and willingness to benefit the community.

We will come out of the closet and be free creative beings. We will socialize democracy. We will socialize capitalism. We will socialize socialism. We will have communion with communists. We will live fully and die a happy death.

You may call me a dreamer but I'm not the only one.

# Selling with Morgan



**As a veteran vendor, Morgan sells with former Groundcover Executive Director Ted Sylvester and Ann Arbor Mayor Christopher Taylor during Vendor Week 2018. Cover: Morgan at the Co-op with author Andre Vasher in the background.**

**ANDRE VASHER**  
Groundcover contributor

The Groundcover News selling process kicks off with a monthly team meeting to discuss articles in the current issue. Each vendor takes a turn describing one story and how they could pitch that article to potential paper buyers. This effort helps make each vendor comfortable with the issue's content, while they share tips on selling the papers.

In these days of the internet with its plethora of free content, Groundcover News salespeople must look for ways to stand out. This means being knowledgeable on the paper's content, going so far as sampling the dish made from the recipe on the back page of each issue. They take the time to learn, and in some cases taste, what they're selling.

Like any job, certain days it can be hard to drag yourself to the workplace. Spending a couple of hours with Schillington Morgan helped me understand the effort the vendors put into their job. On a typical Sunday Morgan attends Vineyard Church on Platt Road in Ann Arbor and sells papers there, then hops the bus downtown to start selling papers outside of the Peoples Food Co-op on Fourth Avenue.

Do folks in Ann Arbor flock to buy a copy of the Groundcover News? Not from what I saw; this selling process requires extra effort. Morgan offers to hold the door for busy shoppers, watch their dog or bike or just give an extra bit of service that wins him a regular customer. His regulars know him by name and make sure to get exact change in order to buy their papers. As in any form of business, success selling Groundcover News involves knowing your customers and showing up on a consistent basis. Even with challenges, including a stay in the hospital for a serious lung infection a couple of years ago, Morgan manages to keep showing up.

Standing on a street in a busy city helps make Morgan a keen observer of humanity. He predicts who will hit the handicap button to open the grocery store door and which toddler may bump up to him on the sidewalk. Morgan stands ready to offer an opinion on the best cup of coffee in the city (Mighty Good), why Lucky's Market in Ann Arbor closed and the value of a minister who really knows the Bible. He's a fan of certain classic cars, but now has a hard time telling various makes and models apart — don't we all!

On the street in all weather conditions, vendors like Morgan must maintain a positive attitude while they work at their craft. I watched many people pass by, averting their eyes in order to avoid considering a purchase. Not many Ann Arborites looked Morgan in the eye and told him "No Thanks" for a paper.

Still he keeps at it. Selling since 2014, he maintains his place on the Ann Arbor sidewalks. I suspect each Groundcover News vendor has their own story, just like Morgan does. Take the time to hear their pitch and consider the effort they put into their job. You would expect people do the same for you regarding your work.

**MORE PEOPLE  
MORE POWER**

**Be sure to take the 2020 Census!**

Counting everyone in our community means more money for Head Start, SNAP, schools, seniors, health care, jobs, infrastructure, and more.

[washtenaw.org/2020census](http://washtenaw.org/2020census)





## As Earth Day turns 50, local leaders step up on climate action

*This year Earth Day celebrations have been cancelled due to COVID-19 but we can use our time at home to make earth-friendly changes to our own habits and advocate for earth-friendly policies.*

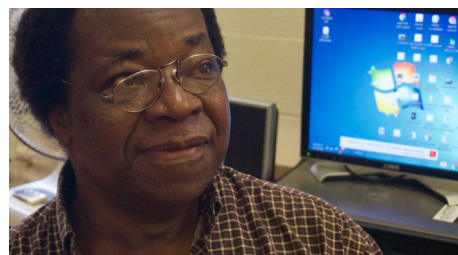
Americans kicked off the 1960s by electing a confident young senator from Massachusetts as president. In his inaugural speech, John F. Kennedy proclaimed, "A torch has been passed to a new generation of Americans."

A decade later, Kennedy's words took on a special significance at another inauguration: on April 22, 1970, America celebrated its first Earth Day.

Biologist Rachel Carson's groundbreaking 1962 book, "Silent Spring," was a powerful environmental clarion call, and was read and admired by President Kennedy. Yet, at the time, there were virtually no federal or state laws to protect American people against harmful chemicals during the explosive prosperity of the 1950s and 1960s. There were no laws to guarantee safe drinking water. There were no laws to control pesticides or to ensure clean air.

As we were reminded by Senator Gaylord Nelson (D-Wis.), the founder of Earth Day, "We disregard the needs of our environment at our mortal peril when we fail to act." That was the lesson of Earth Day.

America's environmental movement made tremendous progress in the 1970s following the first Earth Day. President Nixon and his wife, Pat, symbolically planted a tree at the back lawn of the White House on Earth Day. Major environmental legislation was passed during the Nixon administration, including the Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, and the formation of the Environmental Protection Agency. Today, the hurdle is higher, but the environmental policy achievements of the 70s serve to remind us that bold



**WILL SHAKESPEARE**  
Groundcover vendor No. 258

action to save the planet is possible.

Reflecting on the 50th anniversary of Earth Day and the environmental movement, the level of ecological awareness sparked by the 1960s generation is remarkable. The political and scientific work done in those years laid the foundation for both American and global movements to save our planet for the future. The young activists of the 1960s passed the torch to the young activists of the 1990s (Generation X), and they in turn, passed the torch to the Millennials.

In this century, the young and fearless climate activists have challenged their peer groups, world leaders, businesses and politicians to grasp the concept of *climate emergency*. Decades after climate scientists first sounded the alarm, humanity appears to finally be awakening to the stark reality: climate change is putting planetary habitability at risk, and time to act is quickly running out.

Christina Figueres, known as the architect of the Paris Climate Agreement, spoke at the University of Michigan's Hill Auditorium on March 14, 2019. She said that the climate scientists have informed us about the risks, and that the world is quickly moving towards decarbonization, or carbon neutrality. The next day, a group of U-M and local high school students organized the Washtenaw County Climate Strike at the U-M Diag. There

were sit-ins at the Fleming Administration Building as they demanded a meeting with the university president on the university's actions to halt climate change.

### What is the University of Michigan doing about climate change?

For several decades, U-M has reduced waste and its overall carbon footprint on its three campuses, especially the Ann Arbor campus. More recently, the University set a goal to reach net-zero carbon emissions, or operational carbon neutrality. It is considered an ambitious sustainability goal because it covers the Ann Arbor campus, the Dearborn campus and the Flint campus. U-M President Mark Schlissel also established a President's Commission on Carbon Neutrality to plan and develop scalable strategies for reaching this goal.

Carbon neutrality involves achieving net-zero emissions by balancing the amount of carbon that's emitted into the atmosphere with the amount of carbon that is absorbed from it. Carbon neutrality is about ensuring the numbers on each side of the equation match, and doesn't require eliminating all sources of carbon. For example, people, companies and institutions often buy "carbon offsets" to help them achieve carbon neutrality.

Prior to the March 15 sit-in, Schlissel spoke about climate change at a leadership breakfast in October, 2018. MLive reporter Martin Slagter reported that Schlissel "won't back down from the goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions and making U-M a greener campus." Slagter also reported that "U-M has helped reduce waste generated on campus by hosting zero-waste events." Those kinds of events have continued into 2020 as more students, faculty and staff are urged to recycle and watch their carbon footprints.



**Greta Thunberg, the climate standard-bearer for her generation, follows generations of other activists seeking to protect the earth.**

### What are the City of Ann Arbor and Washtenaw County doing about climate change?

The City of Ann Arbor government declared a climate emergency in 2019. The city council set the goal of carbon neutrality by the year 2030. A few years earlier, the city hired Missy Stults as the city of Ann Arbor's Sustainability and Innovations Manager. In a January 8, 2020 radio interview with host David Fair of WEMU on "Issues of the Environment," Stults shared specifics of what the city is doing about climate change.

According to Stults, Ann Arbor amended their previous goal of powering 100% of the city's municipal operations with clean and renewable energy by 2035, setting a new goal to make the community carbon-neutral by 2030. With these goals in mind, the city will prioritize decisions that will take Ann Arbor to "net zero" in fifteen years. Renewable energy will replace fossil fuels wherever possible, and carbon offsetting measures, like plant-

Continued next page ➡

## Key to solving societal problems is internal

**KEVIN SPANGLER**  
Groundcover vendor No. 307

If we want to solve the issues of society, we must look within ourselves and see what issues we can solve within our own internal universe. It is not just individuals bearing the symptoms of society, such as people with mental disorders, drug addiction or criminal history that are the problem. The truth is, it is actually everyone who is suffering. Even our Mother Earth, our great common ground. We can focus individually on our inward healing ripple to then outwardly ripple to that same healing vibration. We individually improve ourselves to help improve our world as one together.

➡ from EARTH DAY page 6

ing trees, will make up the balance.

Stults further revealed that the city of Ann Arbor's new office of sustainability and innovations has a five-year work plan, and will launch new programs which include developing plans for greener buildings, greener rental housing, waste reduction, more efficient public transportation, more biking options, better community mobility and "community resilience."

Washtenaw County, too, has declared a climate emergency. The Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners have been working closely with the Ann Arbor City Council, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor Public Schools, and the City of Ypsilanti to achieve a collective goal of carbon neutrality by 2035. The town and gown are now allies in carbon neutrality efforts and the innovative quest for 100% clean energy.

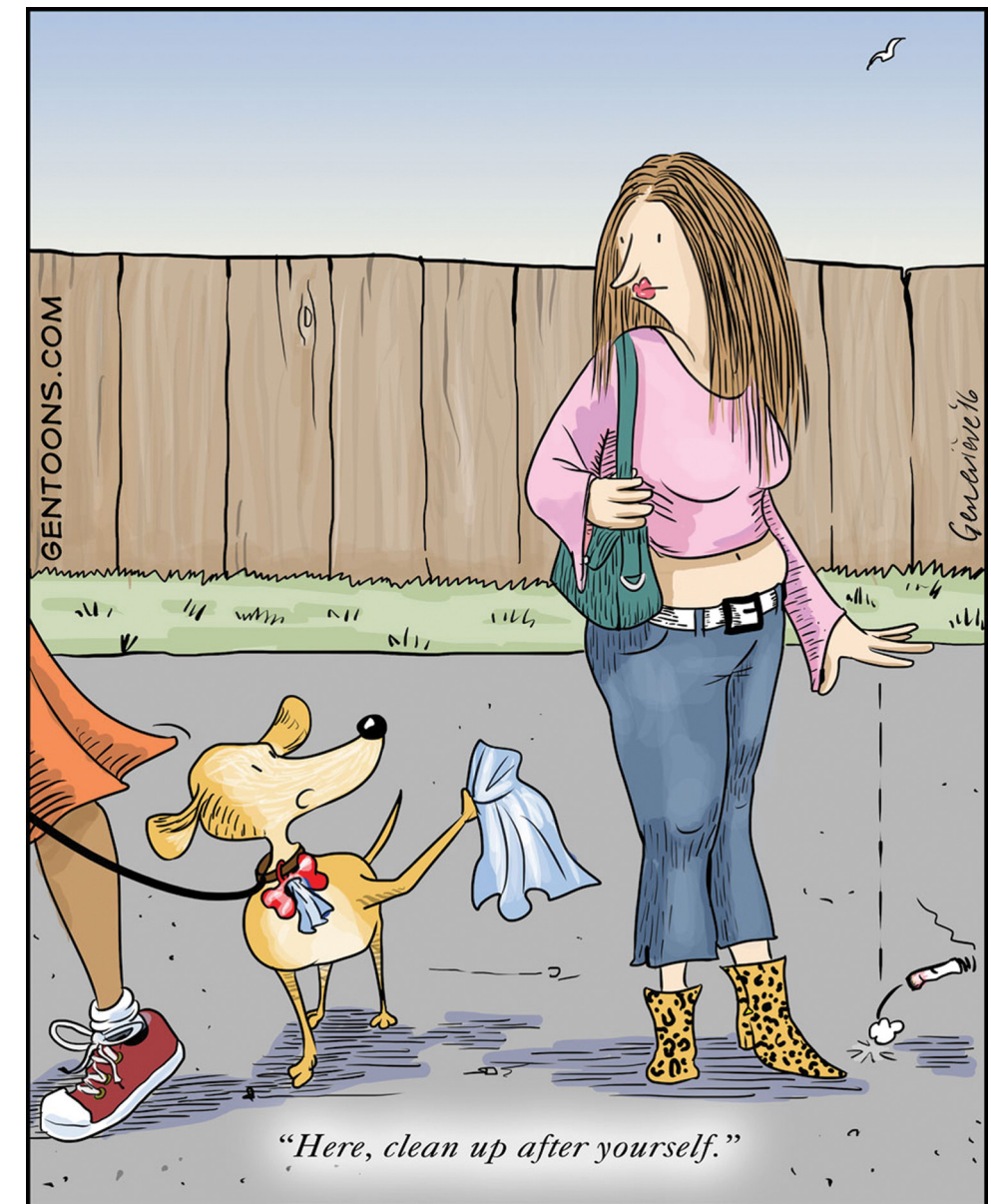
### Bold climate action: a new reality

As we celebrate the 50th anniversary of our nation's first Earth Day, let us take a few moments to reflect on the need for prudent actions to protect the environment and save our planet.

While the global environmental movement has grown steadily over the past half-century, it has not been able to halt many negative ecological trends stemming from unchecked human activity. In a 2018 report, the International Panel on Climate Change — an association of the world's leading climate scientists — issued a warning that humanity has perhaps 12 years to act in order to prevent a flat-out climate catastrophe. Moreover, it is important to keep in mind the time lag between what we

do to Earth's climate and when we feel the consequences: even if we stopped emitting greenhouse gases today, global warming would continue to happen for at least several more decades, if not centuries. With the Trump administration's wholesale assault on environmental protections, including withdrawal of the United States from the 2016 Paris Climate Agreement, we have taken several steps backward just when we needed to move decisively forward.

And then there's this often-overlooked reality: climate change is only one aspect of the ecological crisis. Habitat loss, pollution and overharvesting (as well as climate change) have created a biodiversity crisis that has become known as the "sixth extinction" — the greatest biological extinction event on this planet in at least 65 million years, this time entirely human-caused. A 2018 study published in the peer-reviewed journal *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* warned, "The resulting biological annihilation obviously will have serious ecological, economic and social consequences. Humanity will eventually pay a very high price for the decimation of the only assemblage of life that we know of in the universe." As we approach its 50th anniversary, Earth Day has never been more significant. Seventeen-year-old climate activist Greta Thunberg of Sweden and a generation of teens and young adults now carry the Earth Day torch. Their generation is helping to make combating climate change and other forms of ecological degradation an intergenerational movement. This work is key to our planet's survival. The cost of inaction is sure to be catastrophic.





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**GROUND COVER NEWS**

**Volunteer Meeting**

**Postponed Indefinitely**

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**Groundcover News Office**

Bethlehem United Church of Christ  
423 S. 4th Ave., Ann Arbor, MI  
Opposite the elevator on the basement level



# Mandatory minimums waste money and lives

AARON ST. GERMAIN  
Prison correspondent

*(Editor's note: With no access to the internet and little access to current reports, the author's comments on conditions are based on personal observations. Our insertion of public information that contradicts or elaborates on his assertions is inserted parenthetically.)*

Aaron also wants readers to know that the envelopes are taken from prisoner mail, so if you'd like a reply from a prisoner pen-pal, be sure to include your address on the letter itself. He would especially like to write back to the family who wrote him after his first pen-pal article!

Mandatory minimum sentences are among the biggest mistakes our state has made in trying to reform our justice system. They are crippling our prison system, as every day more come in but few get out. Crowding is exacerbated by harsh punishments and sentences. There is simply no more room for prisoners! *(Michigan's prison population has actually decreased by over 10,000 in the past decade; two state prisons have since closed and 18 others were consolidated.)* Tax dollars are being wasted imprisoning people who are ready to be self-supporting on the outside. *(One-fifth of the 2017 Michigan general fund went to prisoners. The annual cost per prisoner was \$36,106.)*

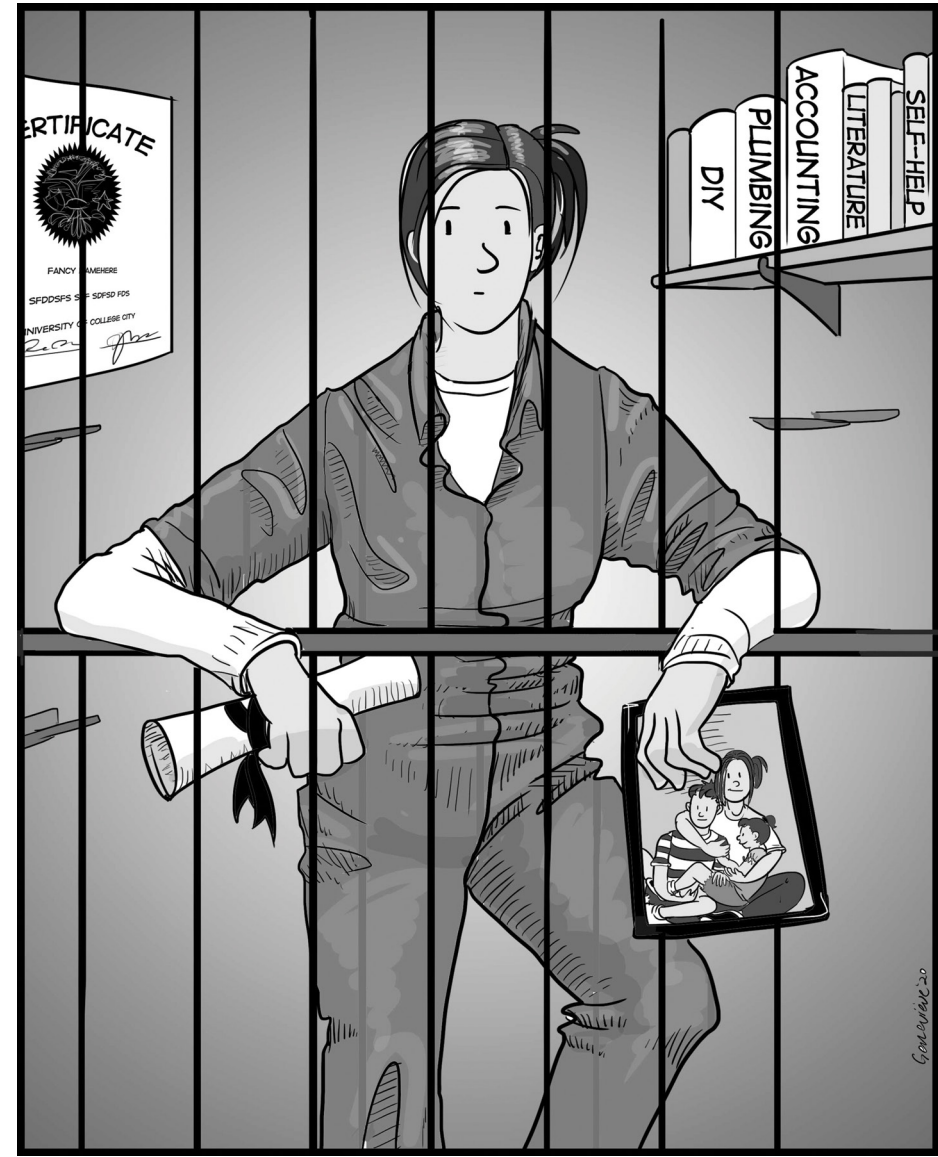
When someone is sentenced to

prison for a felony, there is a minimum amount of time they have to serve that is tied to the crime for which they were convicted and an algorithm of factors relating to the case, not necessarily to what the judge or jury felt was appropriate for that person.

In my case, I was sentenced to 10-15 years and I have to do 10 without a single chance for an early parole. The facts that I am 13 months misconduct-free, have had employment for seven months, and have garnered certificates for classes that I participated in, ultimately have no effect on whether I will obtain a parole or even have a chance to earn "good time" for a possible early release. *(Good time was eliminated in 1978 through a voter referendum, so overturning it would require support from three quarters of the Michigan Legislature.)*

I'm doing 10 years and I'm not allowed to enroll in the mandatory classes I have to take prior to release until I'm within two years of a possible parole. Those first eight years are essentially dead time when nothing is accomplished to help prepare me for re-entry into society. The only way to do that is to purchase self-help books myself. Ha ha ha! I only make \$15 per month in my prison job. I can barely afford basic hygiene products, so how can I afford a book?

Governor Gretchen Whitmer promised prison reform, but we in prison are seeing no results after her first year in office. We inmates need people to



contact the Governor's office and the state legislators and bug them mercilessly until they abolish the mandatory minimums *(and offer relief to those who were sentenced under them)*. So please help — urge elected officials to eliminate mandatory minimums and restore "good time."

## Tales from the curb – another kind of SCORE!

WILL WILLIAMS,  
aka WILLY WILL  
Groundcover contributor

I saw Kevin at the Ann Arbor Area Blake Transit Center one fine afternoon. Kevin is a reclusive, mustached, older gentleman, probably in his 50s, a true Ann Arbor "wall mark" sidewalk drifter from way back. He is definitely a sidewalk sleuth for 10-cent returnable cans, with a

preference for Natty Daddy beers. Like all of us sidewalk soldiers, he is definitely amenable to scores of various sorts.

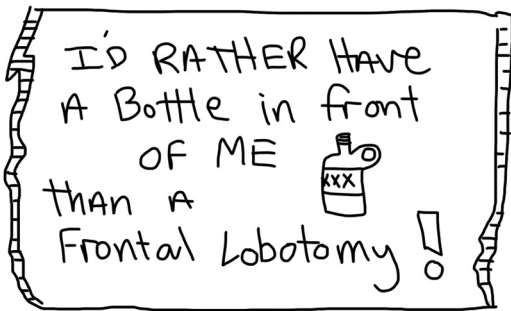
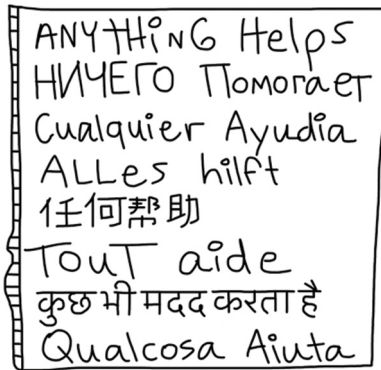
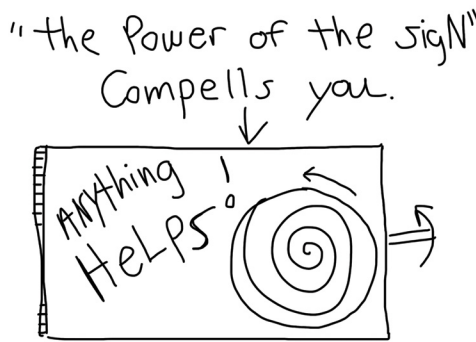
As he responded to my greeting of, "Hey, Kev!" with "Hey, Will!" and his trademark smile, I noticed he had 11 returnables in a bag casually slung over his shoulder and, oddly enough, was drinking a Red Bull. I thought, "Maybe he found wings?!" I've learned, however, not to believe

everything I see.

"Riddle me this," I said to Kevin. "What's wrooong with this picture?!! You got a dollar-ten worth of cans and you're drinking a four-dollar-and-50-cent Red Bull."

He looked puzzled for a moment then he raised his eyebrows and said, "Oh! PORCH!"

Kevin referenced another kind of find: the mighty Porch Score.



### Sudoku

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7	3	5	4					
2	4		7				6	
8					4		5	
	8			1				
3		1			5		2	
				9		1		
6		4						7
	9				4		2	6
				6	1	3	4	

Fill in the squares so that each row, column, and 3-by-3 box contain the numbers 1 through 9.

### Groundcover Vendor Code

While Groundcover News vendors are contracted self-employees, we still have expectations of how vendors should conduct themselves while selling and representing the paper. Every vendor reads and signs this code of conduct before receiving a badge and papers. If you discover a vendor violating any tenets of the code, please contact us at [contact@groundcovernews.com](mailto:contact@groundcovernews.com) or 734-263-2098 and provide as many details as possible. Our paper and our vendors should benefit our county. All vendors must agree to the following:

- Groundcover News will be distributed for a voluntary donation of \$2, or the face value of the paper.
- I agree not to ask for more than face value or solicit donations by any other means.
- I will only sell current issues of Groundcover News.
- I agree not to sell additional goods or products when selling the paper or to panhandle, including panhandling with only one paper.
- I will wear and display my badge when selling papers and refrain from wearing it or other Groundcover gear when engaged in other activities.
- I will only purchase the paper from Groundcover News Staff and will not sell to or buy papers from other Groundcover News vendors, especially vendors who have been suspended or terminated.
- I agree to treat all customers, staff and other vendors respectfully. I will not "hard sell," threaten, harass or pressure customers, staff, or other vendors verbally or physically.
- I will not sell Groundcover News under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- I understand that I am not a legal employee of Groundcover News but a contracted worker responsible for my own well-being and income.

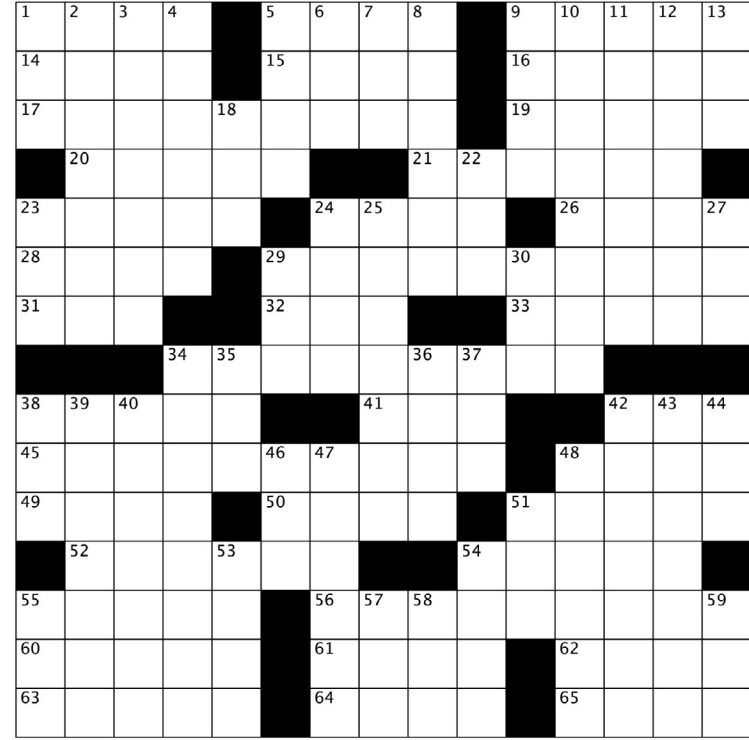
Take your Positions Peter A. Collins

#### ACROSS

1. Hummus go-with
5. Headlight?
9. "That's no surprise"
14. Govt. banking protector
15. "Right away!"
16. Bar Harbor's state
17. The puck drops here
19. Goaded
20. Spry
21. City near Mt. Vesuvius
23. Free of problems
24. Pay attention to
26. '60's TV star with a horse voice?
28. Secluded valley
29. Highway barriers
31. Exasperated exclamations
32. ATM-making co.
33. Big name in mac & cheese
34. It has hooks and flies?
38. Artichoke part
41. Ex-NBA star Ming
42. "Shop \_\_\_ you drop"
45. "Period!"
48. Colosseum's's locale
49. Injection
50. Footwear brand
51. Tin Man's request
52. Like Dickens' "Dodger"
54. On one's toes
55. Orphan of comics
56. At risk (and a hint where the first words of 17-, 29-, 34-, and 45-Across can be found on playing football)
60. Something picked up by a 61-Across
61. Something that might pick up a 60-Across
62. Hardy's "\_\_\_ of the D'Urbervilles"
63. Bushy border
64. Participated in a medley relay
65. First-year law student

#### DOWN

1. U.S. Army rank
2. If nothing goes wrong
3. Feels all prickly
4. Director's shout



Peter A. Collins

5. Noted napper in a fable
6. "\_\_\_ was saying..."
7. French for "lake"
8. Bar accessory
9. "It's my turn to bat!"
10. "The Communist Manifesto" co-author
11. Most populous African nation
12. By \_\_\_ (alone)
13. Joined
18. Animal on the Michigan state flag
22. Include
23. In the past
24. \_\_\_ Finn
25. Initially
27. D.C. summer hrs.
29. Mall store that sells supplements
30. "Citizen Kane" studio
34. Emulating a horse
35. Anti-trafficking org.
36. Corn units
37. Peter Pan, permanently
38. "\_\_\_ So Fine," (#1 Chiffons hit)
39. Jazz up
40. Embellished
42. Bilbo Baggins' creator
43. Huge
44. "BlackKklansman" director
46. "Law & Order" spinoff, familiarly
47. Raptor's claws
48. Venice bridge
51. Have a mortgage, e.g.
53. Big celebration
54. Attention getter
55. \_\_\_ Wednesday
57. "Right away!"
58. Airport x-ray agcy.
59. New arrival's course, for short

- I understand that my badge is property of Groundcover News and will not deface it. I will present my badge when purchasing the papers.
- I agree to stay off private property when selling Groundcover News.
- I understand to refrain from selling on public buses, federal property or stores unless there is permission from the owner.
- I agree to stay at least one block away from another vendor. I will also abide by the Vendor corner policy.

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1/6	\$129.95	\$165.95	5 x 4
1/4	\$159.95	\$215.95	5 x 6.25
1/2	\$299.95	\$399.95	10.25 x 6.5 or 5 x 13
Full Page	\$495.95	\$669.95	10.25 x 13

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- Six Months/Six Issues: 25% off
- Full Year/Twelve Issues: 35% off
- Additional 20% off ads with coupons



Hurry On

RON PAGERESKI  
Groundcover contributor

As you hurry on your way, do you see them there?

Safely hid among the shadows, their tears go unnoticed.

Wrapped in rags and cardboard comforters, shivering.

Brother can you spare a dime? Do you see them there?

Their tears dropping from eyes which have known much pain.

Hurry on your way, don't even say hello.

The downtrodden of the world, the black and the white,

stand there in shabby clothes, hurry on your way

you have no time to talk to them, important people await your arrival

you care not for the homeless or their survival.

Have your lavish dinner, a Margarita too, leave a generous tip.

You listen not to the cry of those so low,

will a kind word even cross your lip?

Hurry on your way,

ignore the cry coming from the wilderness of the street.

Treat the outcasts like the gum stuck to your shoe.

Their silent tears go unnoticed, as you hurry on your way.

A Remembering Gene

CHRIS ELLIS  
Groundcover vendor No. 483

In the microscopic  
kernel that contains  
stores  
plays in the sky  
sits still  
as our stories move...

Is cosmos  
really  
a  
brain!

Offering aroma  
out of place  
vivid  
slice through open door and

Opaque blue corridor  
windows  
floating  
on  
the  
ground.

➡ CORONAVIRUS from page 2

cleanliness and sanitation. Using restrooms as a metric of cleanliness, I have noticed that as I travel through richer neighborhoods, the restrooms tend to be cleaner. Imagine the restroom of a high-end hotel as opposed to one at a gas station in a poor area of a city. Is one cleaner than the other due to a corresponding gap

in attitudes about the importance of sanitation? Or is it because our society seriously underplays the needs of people living at its margins?

Safety from danger is almost as important as shelter, clothing or food. We generally think of safety in terms of protection from immediate danger, such as escaping a violent situation. Safety from an industry point of view, however, includes being free or

protected from hazards such as exposed electrical wires or a wet floor. It also includes protection from blood-borne pathogens and other diseases that result from poor sanitation.

Homeless people are not safe — not ever, but especially not now. With the conditions they are exposed to, this population is as vulnerable as the elderly and we must take measures to protect them from the coronavirus.

Please consider donating hand sanitizer and other preventive supplies in addition to food and clothing to either the Ann Arbor or Ypsilanti MISSION Peace House ([MISSIONA2.org](https://missiona2.org)).

On behalf of all of us at Groundcover News, please be careful and take the measures necessary to protect yourself and your families. God bless and good luck.

➡ FIRE from page 4

brothers, fell asleep in one of the seats in the balcony and was overlooked when at service end we piled into our father's station wagon and set out for home. We had driven for some time, and were nearing home, when it was suddenly discovered that he wasn't in the car. Panic seized my mother as she wailed, "How did you leave him!"

My older sisters were to blame as the younger of us were their church children and responsibility. "I dunno," protested Dellane, the oldest. "I was watching Haywood and Chris." My father, calm as ever, simply turned our crisis-packed car around onto the freeway and headed back to the church.

We boys huddled in the luggage section of the station wagon and imagined the horror unspeakable — "Did old lady Frenchie get him?" She was the lady over the incubator where the toilers for the Tongues of Fire met. We were sure that our brother was a goner, nothing left but those marbles in his shorts. Frenchie would roam the balcony during service, murmuring to herself, "Shaaa Naa Naaa, Shaaa Naaa Naaa." She was ghastly and seemly devoid of color. She always wore some kind of long shawl which spread wide around her as she called, "Come to the Tongues of Fire, are you saved?"

As our car exited the freeway and presently turned onto Crenshaw Boulevard, the broad thoroughfare where the church was, we awaited doom. My father pulled the car alongside the curb and exited the car, my mother rushing forward. My father unlocked one of the glass doors and disappeared inside.

We sat silently in the car as the night Boulevard traffic rushed by, the blank marquee above our head announcing our void and dread. Soon the glass doors opened and out came little

Timmy, yawning and rubbing his eyes. He had slept clear through Frenchie's "Shaaa Naaa Naaa."

So it should be no surprise when, four years later, having returned to Detroit under the life-changing circumstances which rendered my mom single, I was no friend of the Tongues of Fire. Here in Detroit, the synagogue awaited and the ghosts of the Old Testament breathed heavily down aisles and curled around those marble pillars as the short preacher poured out dragon fire, hot and piercing over the congregation where I sat on the front pew just below the belching stream.

I had become a depressed child, always in fear, and it was a fear that religion encouraged and fanned. I had no outlet, and the Tongues of Fire finally seemed to be the only option to survive. So, I sought for the toiling room. I had to have the Tongues of Fire. I pursued it vehemently. I went to the toiling women, I gave myself to their arms as they toiled with me, "Say hallelujah very fast, son, no matter how it sounds! Keep your mind on Jesus!" I toiled often, and still no Tongues of Fire. I was possessed — school or basketball with my brothers was trivial, I had to receive the gift. Mother Johnson, with her very dark skin, kindly soft eyes and robust face appeared to pity me as she sat beside my kneeling young and desperate form. She reminded me of Sojourner Truth, wrapped in her white clothing.

However, the day of my Canaan Land deliverance finally came. One day, in the toiling room as I knelt beside Mother Johnson, pleading to the heavens, spilling out unintelligible "Hallelujahs" and "Thank-you-Jesuses," I began to hear myself calmly and sweetly speaking a string of syllables and a coherence that I didn't understand. I was serenely still in my speech and I felt saved, and that the Tongues of Fire had at last come.

PUZZLE SOLUTIONS

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982615743  
361847592  
457392618  
624183957  
193574826  
578926134

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
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E	N	D	O	F	S	T	O	R	Y	R	O	M
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S	C	E	N	T	E	N	O	S	E	T	E	S
H	E	D	G	E	S	W	A	M	O	N	E	L



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# Blueberry blue cheese spread

**ELIZABETH BAUMAN**  
Groundcover contributor

½ cup dried blueberries  
1 cup boiling water  
1 8-oz package cream cheese, softened  
6 oz. blue cheese, coarsely crumbled  
2 green onions, chopped  
1 clove garlic, minced  
½ to ⅔ cup coarsely chopped pecans



Place blueberries in a small bowl and pour boiling water over blueberries. Let stand for 1 to 2 minutes and drain well. Set aside. In a large mixing bowl, beat cream cheese and blue cheese on medium speed until nearly smooth. Stir in blueberries, onion and garlic just until combined.

Cover and refrigerate for 4 hours. Just before serving, place in a serving bowl and sprinkle with pecans. Serve with whole grain crackers.

## Bethlehem United Church of Christ

whoever you are, and wherever you are on life's journey, you are welcome here

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Bethlehem-ucc.org  facebook.com/bethlehemucca2

Bethlehem Church is home of the Groundcover office



### APRIL 2020 EVENTS AT BETHLEHEM

We're worshipping virtually due to COVID-19.

Sunday Worship at 10 am

Join us by radio (1600AM) or Facebook Live video stream.

Visit our website: [www.bethlehem-ucc.org](http://www.bethlehem-ucc.org) for ways to connect.

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/bethlehemucca2](https://www.facebook.com/bethlehemucca2)

Should the COVID-19 restrictions be lifted, our Easter Services are listed below

Apr 12

Easter Sunrise Service, 6:45 Bethlehem Cemetery

Easter Worship Service, 10:00 am

Please visit our website or Facebook page for the latest updates



## St. Francis invites you to join in Mass by LiveStream:

Spanish: [stfrancisa2.com/misa](http://stfrancisa2.com/misa)

English: [stfrancisa2.com/mass](http://stfrancisa2.com/mass)

### Regular Mass Times Mon-Thurs 9:15am

**Fri 8:15am**

**Sat 5pm**  
7pm (Spanish)

**Sun 10:30am**

### Holy Week & Easter Holy Thursday 7pm

**Good Friday**  
12pm Scripture & Music  
1:30pm Veneration of the Cross

**Holy Saturday 8pm**

**Easter Sunday 10:30am\***

**During the LiveStream mass, make a spiritual communion by praying this or a similar prayer:**

*My Jesus, I believe that You are present in the Most Holy Sacrament. I love You above all things, and I desire to receive You into my soul. Since I cannot at this moment receive You sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace You as if You were already there and unit myself wholly to You. Never permit me to be separated from you. Amen.*

\*If we are permitted to assemble, there will also be Easter Masses at 7:00am, 8:30am, 10:30am, and 12:30pm. There is no 5pm Easter Mass.



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